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GHOST RIDER

JOHNNY BLAZE IS CURSED, DOOMED TO LIVE LIFE AS THE GHOST RIDER, A BRUTAL SPIRIT THAT EXISTS ONLY TO METE OUT VENGEANCE AGAINST EVILDOERS. AFTER YEARS SPENT BEING A PAWN OF HELL, BLAZE HAS RECENTLY LEARNED THAT THE GHOST RIDER IS ACTUALLY A WEAPON OF HEAVEN, BONDED TO HIM BY THE RENEGADE ANGEL ZADKIEL. AT LONG LAST, BLAZE KNOWS EXACTLY WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR RUINING HIS LIFE. BUT THE ONLY QUESTION IS, HOW DOES HE GET REVENGE ON AN ANGEL?

IN THE MOUNTAINS OF TIBET, BLAZE HAS LEARNED FROM HIS COHORT, THE NUN NAMED SISTER SARA, THAT THERE EXIST COUNTLESS DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE GHOST RIDER FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD, AND THAT ZADKIEL IS PLOTTING TO HARNESS THEIR POWERS IN ORDER TO OVERTHROW HEAVEN. AT THE HEART OF ZADKIEL'S PLAN IS DANNY KETCH, BLAZE'S LONG LOST BROTHER, WITH WHOM HE HAS JUST BEEN REUNITED.

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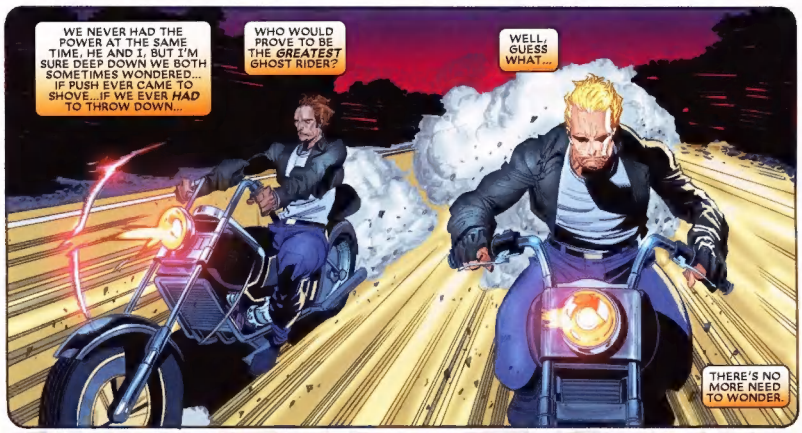
TIBET.
OH MY GOD, DANNY...
WHAT DID YOU DO?
I'M NOT HERE TO SEE YOU, JOHNNY.
I'M HERE FOR HIM. SHOW HIM TO ME.
DANNY--
SHOW HIM TO ME!
OKAY.
OKAY, YOU SONUVA BITCH.
YOU ASKED FOR IT.

MY NAME'S JOHNNY BLAZE.
AND THIS HERE'S MY CURSE.
HAS BEEN FOR YEARS.
WAY BACK WHEN I FIRST GOT SADDLED WITH THIS WHOLE MESS, I'D NEVER EVEN HEARD THE NAME DANNY KETCH.
The KETCH Family House
Francis
Barbara
Daniel
DIDN'T EVEN KNOW I HAD A KID BROTHER (TRUST ME, THAT'S A LONG STORY, ONE I AIN'T EVEN SURE I UNDERSTAND).
WHO IS THE GHOST RIDER?
EVENTUALLY I WAS ABLE TO FREE MYSELF OF THE GHOST RIDER AND RETURN TO A NORMAL LIFE. HAD A WIFE AND A FAMILY.
FOR A WHILE, AT LEAST.

THAT'S WHEN THE CURSE PASSED TO DANNY.

WHILE HE WAS THE ONE WITH THE FLAMING NOGGIN, I WAS POWERLESS EXCEPT FOR MY TRUSTY LITTLE *HELLFIRE SHOTGUN.*
EVENTUALLY THOUGH, THE BURDEN CAME BACK AROUND TO ME, AND DANNY AND I DRIFTED APART.


WE NEVER HAD THE POWER AT THE SAME TIME, HE AND I, BUT I'M SURE DEEP DOWN WE BOTH SOMETIMES WONDERED... IF PUSH EVER CAME TO SHOVE...IF WE EVER *HAD* TO THROW DOWN...
WHO WOULD PROVE TO BE THE *GREATEST* GHOST RIDER?
WELL, GUESS WHAT...
THERE'S NO MORE NEED TO WONDER.

'CAUSE WE'RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT.
LAST STAND OF THE
SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE
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YOU GOT ADDICTED TO THE POWER, DIDN'T YOU? COULDN'T LIVE WITHOUT IT.
SO YOU SOLD YOURSELF TO ZADKIEL.
DIDN'T YOU, YOU STUPID BASTARD?
I'M ONLY DOING WHAT HAS TO BE DONE. AS USUAL, YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND.
OH, I UNDERSTAND PLENTY. THAT GUY BACK THERE IN THE MONASTERY... HE WAS ONE OF US. JUST ANOTHER POOR FOOL SADDLED WITH THIS CURSE. AND YOU KILLED HIM.
I FREED HIM OF HIS BURDEN.
AND NOW YOU'RE HERE TO FREE ME OF MINE, IS THAT IT?
EVEN AFTER ALL THIS TIME, JOHNNY, YOU STILL UNDERSTAND NEXT TO NOTHING OF THIS POWER OR WHAT IT TRULY MEANS.
OH YEAH, WELL WHY DON'T YOU SHOW ME THEN, MR. BIG SHOT? HUH?
C'MON, YOU PATHETIC LITTLE BASTARD! SHOW ME SOMETHING!

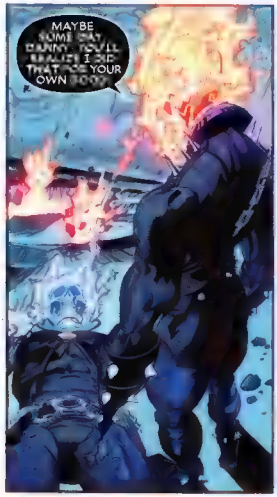
WHOOOOM!!!

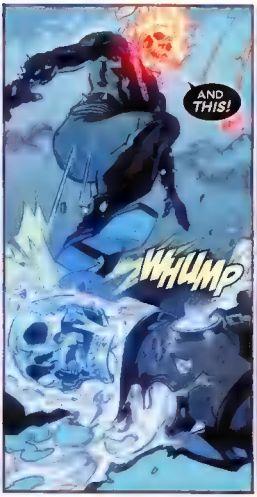
I'VE GOT SO MUCH *MORE* TO SHOW YOU.
GET UP.

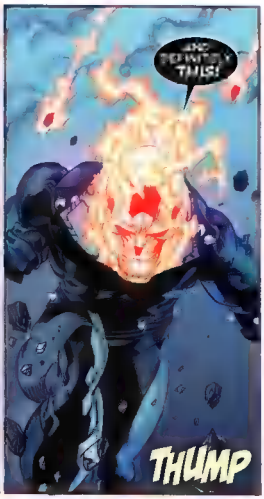
WHAAM!!
KKREEAAKKK
CRAACK
YOU'RE NO MATCH FOR ME, JOHNNY.
I'M MORE POWERFUL THAN YOU COULD EVER HOPE TO BE.

MAYBE SOME DAY, BROTHER, YOU'LL FINALLY SEE THE TRUTH.
YOU'LL UNDERSTAND I DID THIS FOR YOUR OWN GOOD.
UKK
I WISH YOU'D STOP BEING SO GOOD TO ME....
"BROTHER."

WHOOOOOOM!!!


MAYBE SOME DAY DANNY WILL REALIZE I DID THAT TO BE YOUR OWN GOOD.


AND THIS!
WHUMP


AND DEFINITELY THIS!
THUMP

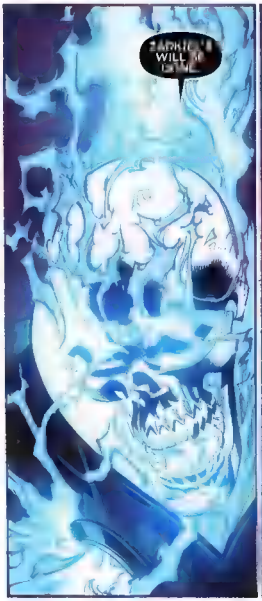
ZADKIEL'S MADE A MESS OF YOU. TURNED YOU INTO THE LAZARUS PIT THAT'S ALL I DID. BECAUSE YOU'RE GONNA HELP ME GET TO HIM.
LET'S JUST SEE WHAT YOU'VE BEEN MADE OF, SHALL WE?

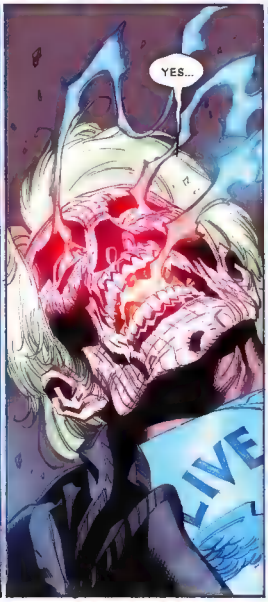
REMEMBER THE *PENANCE STARE*, DON'T YOU. I DON'T IT BE YOUR TRADEMARK MOVE. MAKE SOME POOR PATHETIC BASTARD EXPERIENCE ALL THE PAIN AND SUFFERING HE'S EVER CAUSED OTHERS. QUITE A JOLT, I'LL BET.
WELL, GUESS WHAT?
YOU'RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT WHAT IT FEELS LIKE ON THE RECEIVING END.
AAAARRRRGGGHHH!

DANNY... MY GOD...
ALL THOSE PEOPLE... ALL THOSE GHOST RIDERS... YOU STOLE THEIR POWERS FOR ZADKIEL.
YOU KILLED THEM.
I AM NOT A KILLER!
WHACK
I SAVED THEM!
I OFFERED THEM THE CHANCE TO BE RID OF THEIR CURSE. I OFFERED THEM THE CHANCE TO BE FREE OF THEIR BURDEN.
AT LEAST THEY'LL BE FREE NOW.
THEY'RE DEAD!
CRACK
YOU'RE A MURDERER, DANNY. YOU'VE GOT TO PAY FOR--
I DID THE RIGHT THING!
SMACK

YOU WANNA TALK ABOUT *SINS*, JOHNNY...
NO...
LET'S JUST HAVE A LOOK AT *YOURS*.
NOOOOOOOO!!

CRAIG, EMMA... ROXANNE...
OH GOD...
THERE ARE TOO MANY DEATHS ON YOUR CONSCIENCE, JOHNNY.
ALL BECAUSE OF THE GHOST RIDER. IT'S BEEN YOUR *CURSE* FOR FAR TOO LONG.
BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO CARRY THIS BURDEN ANYMORE.
LET ME TAKE IT. THAT'S WHY I'M HERE.
YES.
YES, *TAKE IT*... PLEASE.
JUST TAKE IT AWAY.
CLOSE YOUR EYES, BROTHER.
AND IT WILL ALL BE OVER IN A MOMENT.


DARKNESS WILL NOT DIE


YES...
LIVE

NO!

WHUMP
GET UP, JOHNNY!
NO, LEAVE ME. GET OUT OF HERE.
I CAN'T DO THAT!
C'MON!
NO! NO, TAKE IT AWAY! NOOOO!

THREE DAYS LATER..
NEPAL.

IT'S ME. I BROUGHT GROCERIES. YOU HUNGRY?

LEAVE ME ALONE.

YOU HAVEN'T EATEN ANYTHING IN THREE DAYS, BLAZE. IS THIS HOW YOU WANNA DIE? SLOWLY STARVING TO DEATH IN A KATHMANDU FLOPHOUSE?
IT'S BETTER THAN I DESERVE.
SO THAT'S IT THEN! ZADKIEL WINS! JUST LIKE THAT! AND JOHNNY BLAZE IS THE BIG LOSER, YET AGAIN!
WHAT DID YOU THINK WHEN YOU DECIDED TO GO AFTER AN ANGEL? THAT IT'D BE EASY?
THAT YOU COULD BRING HIM DOWN BY BEING A COWARD!
I AIN'T NO COWARD.
OH YEAH? THEN SHOW ME.
GO TO HELL.

THAT'S JUST GREAT, BLAZE! LET'S JUST LAY AROUND AND LET ALL OF HEAVEN GO UP IN FLA--
CREAK
CRASH
STAND BACK OR I'LL CUT YOU IN TWO, I SWEAR BY ALL THAT'S HOLY!
PUT THAT THING AWAY, GIRL. YOU AND MR. BLAZE HAD BEST COME WITH US..

OR ELSE THERE'LL SOON BE NOTHING LEFT IN ALL THE WORLD THAT YOU MIGHT STILL CALL HOLY.
NEXT ISSUE:
MORE FIGHTS!
MORE SURPRISES!
MORE GHOST RIDERS!